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to scale but that they are merely conceptual in nature. It is the intention, therefore, to be limited only as indicated by the scope of the claims appended hereto.--.

IN THE CLAIMS:

Cancel claims 1 to 9, without prejudice.

Add the following new claims:

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10. A calender for calendering a web of paper or board comprising
a top variable-crown roll;
a bottom variable-crown roll;
at least one intermediate roll positioned between said top roll and said bottom roll, said top roll, said bottom roll and said at least one intermediate roll being disposed in a stack such that the rolls may be brought into nip contact with adjacent rolls to form a nip during calendering;
bearing blocks in which said rolls are mounted;
a frame;
mounts to which said bearing blocks of said at least one intermediate roll are connected, said mounts of said at least one intermediate roll being slidably connected to guides in said frame; and
actuator means positioned between at least one of said mounts and said bearing blocks, said actuator means operable to relieve nip loading imposed by weight of said rolls and auxiliary means, the auxiliary means comprising said bearing blocks, said mounts and said actuator means.
11. The calender of claim 10, wherein said actuator means comprises a spring.
12. The calender of claim 10, wherein said actuator means comprises a hydraulic cylinder.

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13. The calender of claim 11, wherein said actuator means comprises a hydraulic cylinder.

14. The calender of claim 10, wherein said actuator means are adapted to function between said mounts of said rolls forming said nips.

15. The calender of claim 11, wherein said actuator means are adapted to function between said mounts of said rolls forming said nips.

16. The calender of claim 12, wherein said actuator means are adapted to function between said mounts of said rolls forming said nips.

17. The calender of claim 13, wherein said actuator means are adapted to function between said mounts of said rolls forming said nips.

18. The calender of claim 10, wherein said actuator means are adapted to function between said bearing blocks of said rolls forming said nips.

19. The calender of claim 11, wherein said actuator means are adapted to function between said bearing blocks of said rolls forming said nips.

20. The calender of claim 12, wherein said actuator means are adapted to function between said bearing blocks of said rolls forming said nips.

21. The calender of claim 13, wherein said actuator means are adapted to function between said bearing blocks of said rolls forming said nips.

22. The calender of claim 14, wherein said actuator means are adapted to function between said bearing blocks of said rolls forming said nips.

23. The calender of claim 15, wherein said actuator means are adapted to function between said bearing blocks of said rolls forming said nips.

24. The calender of claim 16, wherein said actuator means are adapted to function between said bearing blocks of said rolls forming said nips.

25. The calender of claim 17, wherein said actuator means are adapted to function between said bearing blocks of said rolls forming said nips.

26. The calender of claim 12, wherein a cylinder portion of said hydraulic cylinders and hydraulic channels thereof are formed in said mounts.

27. The calender of claim 13, wherein a cylinder portion of said hydraulic cylinders and hydraulic channels thereof are formed in said mounts.

28. The calender of claim 12, wherein a cylinder portion of said hydraulic cylinders and hydraulic channels thereof are formed in said bearing blocks.

29. The calender of claim 13, wherein a cylinder portion of said hydraulic cylinders and hydraulic channels thereof are formed in said bearing blocks.

30. The calender of claim 26, wherein a cylinder portion of said hydraulic cylinders and hydraulic channels thereof are formed in said bearing blocks.

31. The calender of claim 27, wherein a cylinder portion of said hydraulic cylinders and hydraulic channels thereof are formed in said bearing blocks.

32. A method for calendering a web of paper or board comprising:

passing a web to be calendered via nips formed by a top variable-crown roll, a bottom variable-crown roll, and at least one intermediate roll, at least one intermediate roll being positioned between said top roll and said bottom roll, said top roll, said bottom roll and said at least one intermediate roll being disposed in a stack such that the rolls may be brought into nip contact with adjacent rolls to form a nip during calendering, said rolls being mounted in bearing blocks, the bearing blocks of the intermediate roll being slidably connected to a frame by mounts; and

relieving nip loading imposed by weight of said rolls and auxiliary means with an actuator means positioned between at least one of said mounts and said bearing blocks, the auxiliary means comprising the bearing blocks, the mounts and the actuator means.

33. The method of claim 32, wherein the actuator means are operable to accomplish at least substantially complete relief of the nip loading imposed by the weight of said intermediate rolls and the auxiliary means connected thereto.